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BY THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Report To The Honorable Vic Fazio House Of Representatives

Equipment Used By Texas National Guard In Honduras

From March 30 to April 18, 1985, the Texas National Guard participated in the BIG PINE III military exercise in Honduras. GAO was asked to determine if any equipment had been left in Honduras by the Guard. GAO found that all equipment had been returned to Texas.

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GAO/NSIAD-85-103
JUNE 17, 1985

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UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

NATIONAL SECURITY AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

B-219078

The Honorable Vic Fazio
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Fazio:

Subject: Equipment Used by Texas National Guard in Honduras (GAO/NSIAD-85-103)

Your April 12, 1985, letter requested that we determine what equipment the Texas National Guard took to Honduras for the BIG PINE III (also known as AHUAS TARA III) exercise, and what, if any, equipment was left in Honduras when the Guard returned to Texas. We also looked into allegations that the California National Guard had been asked to abandon equipment in Honduras if they participated in the BIG PINE III exercise and determined whether similar requests had been made of the Texas National Guard.

The California National Guard declined an invitation to participate in the exercise because training commitments for the year had already been made and, in their opinion, training benefits from the Honduran exercise would be minimal. Subsequently, on December 4, 1984, the Texas National Guard accepted the Army's invitation to participate in BIG PINE III. Working with Army planners, the Texas National Guard prepared a list of 163 items of equipment, including 17 M60 tanks, 17 M113 personnel carriers, 76 trucks, 38 trailers, and miscellaneous vehicles and generators that would be needed for the exercise. Plans were initiated for transferring personnel and equipment to and from Honduras.

An advance detachment of 106 National Guard personnel deployed to Honduras from Kelly Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas, by military aircraft on March 19 and 20, 1985. They took 10 vehicles with them aboard the aircraft. The remainder of the vehicles and equipment were shipped to San Lorenzo, Honduras, on the commercial vessel TRANSCOLUMBIA, which departed Beaumont, Texas, on March 17, 1985. Another 313 personnel flew to Honduras on March 30 and 31, 1985, and picked up the vehicles and equipment in San Lorenzo.

The equipment sent to Honduras, which we verified with copies of the shipping manifests obtained from the Military Traffic Management Command's representative and U.S. Air Force representatives who transported the equipment, is listed in enclosure I. At the close of their participation in the military exercise in Honduras, from March 30 to April 18, 1985, Texas National Guard personnel were airlifted back to Texas.

On April 29, 1985, the Adjutant General of Texas and members of his staff told us that vehicles and equipment used in the BIG PINE III exercise would arrive on May 1, 1985, at the port of Beaumont, Texas. On May 1, we observed the equipment being off-loaded and compared it to the list of equipment shipped to Honduras. We found that all items on the lists and manifests provided by the National Guard, the Military Traffic Management Command and the Air Force had been returned, except for opened boxes of medical supplies worth about $800.

The Chief of Administrative Support Services for the Guard told us that the medical supplies, such as bandages, aspirin, cough syrup, and other nonprescription drugs, were left in Honduras for humanitarian reasons.

Regarding the allegation that it had been suggested to California authorities that the California National Guard leave some or all of its equipment in Honduras, we met with the Adjutant General, Chief of Staff, and other National Guard officials in California. They all stated that such a suggestion had not been made. Two officers who had been on an advance survey party stated that they had discussed redeployment plans for all equipment.

We also spoke with the Adjutant General and other officers of the Texas National Guard, who told us that they had no knowledge of any request to leave equipment in Honduras. The U.S. Property and Fiscal officer of the Texas National Guard, who is responsible for all federal funds and equipment, also said that no such suggestion had been made to him.

Finally, we spoke with the Chief of Staff, Texas Governor's office, who was very familiar with the Honduran exercise. He told us that the Governor's Office had received no calls from the Pentagon, the Department of Defense, or any other office--either before, during, or after the exercise--suggesting that the Guard leave any military equipment in Honduras. He said that, as Chief of Staff, he would have been the official contacted about such a request. He also said that the Governor had directed the Adjutant General of the Texas National Guard to bring back all equipment taken to Honduras.

Texas and California National Guard officials reviewed the draft report and provided oral concurrence with its information. We performed our review during April and May 1985 in accordance with generally accepted government audit standards.

We hope this information meets your needs. As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 10 days from the date of the report. At that time we will send copies to interested parties and make copies available to others upon request.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Conahan

Frank C. Conahan
Director

Enclosure

VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT TAKEN TO HONDURAS AND RETURNED TO TEXAS BY THE TEXAS NATIONAL GUARD

Type of equipment	Quantity	To Honduras		From Honduras
		By air	By sea	By sea
M60 tank	17	-	17	17
M113 personnel carrier	17	-	17	17
M577 command vehicle	2	-	2	2
M88 recovery vehicle	2	-	2	2
Trucks[a]	76	7	69	76
Trailers[b]	38	3	35	38
Forklift	2	-	2	2
Sedan	1	-	1	1
Firefighting set	1	-	1	1
M886 ambulance	1	-	1	1
Miscellaneous[c]	6	-	6	6
Total	163	10	153	163

[a]Types included 5-ton wrecker, instrument repair service, 60-ton, 2 1/2-ton, 1 1/4-ton, 1/4-ton, water tank, and maintenance trucks.

[b]Types included repair parts storage, water tank, 12-ton, 1 1/2-ton, 3/4-ton, and 1/4-ton trailers.

[c]Included M60 bridge launchers, 30-kilowatt generator sets, and commercial utility cargo vehicles.